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# Montana Department of Livestock

301 N. Roberts/PO Box 202001  
Helena MT 59620-2001  
On the web at <http://liv.mt.gov>

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**Contact:** Eric Liska, DVM / Tahnee Szymanski, DVM  
Montana Department of Livestock  
406/444-2043

## **Department of Livestock Advises Against Showing Waterfowl at Events This Summer**

The Department of Livestock (DOL) recommends that privately owned waterfowl sit out this coming show season citing the risk of avian influenza. Waterfowl can carry the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus without showing signs of disease, increasing the risk for spread to other poultry.

This recommendation is in response to the HPAI outbreak that has affected more than 40 million birds since December 2014 in the United States. Two separate cases of HPAI have been diagnosed in Montana, and both have involved exposure to infected waterfowl.

"These waterfowl may appear healthy but if infected, could easily spread the virus to other birds in the barn during a county fair", says state veterinarian Marty Zaluski.

Exhibitions are an increased risk when dealing with contagious diseases because animals are traveling from multiple sources and are concentrated in one area during the event. The threat of HPAI will likely remain through the show season and limiting the movement of waterfowl is a proactive step to prevent disease in the domestic poultry population.

Dr. Zaluski states that, "We are pleased that fair boards in our state are communicating with us about the risks of this disease and we will continue to work with them as the national outbreak evolves. We also recommend that exhibitors seeing any unusual losses or signs of disease in their birds refrain from bringing animals to any show."

Exhibitors should contact their veterinarian or the DOL (406-444-2043) with additional concerns or if they find sick or dead birds that have died from unknown causes.

Three HPAI strains have been detected in the US poultry flock but have not been shown to cause human illness according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Poultry products are also safe to eat when properly prepared and cooked to 165° F.